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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of community colleges in recruiting and developing new K-12 teachers. Surveys were mailed to over 100 community colleges with teacher recruitment programs nationwide. The surveys were directed to contacts such as presidents, deans, and vice presidents of instruction and directors of exemplary projects/programs at community colleges. The survey requested information about the community college project, program, and/or activities in 10 major areas. Analysis of the 205 returned surveys indicated that the programs varied greatly. Nearly 80 percent had some form of articulation agreement with a four-year institution. The transfer rate of students from responding community college teacher preparation programs to a four-year institution was more than double the national average of students who transferred from community colleges to four-year institutions. Programs served a notable range of student diversity. Most programs included some form of field experience. The two top ranked choices for program goals related to transfer of students. One of the highest ranked institutional barriers was tuition. Barriers to success included work and family obligations. Better qualified staff was the highest ranked program need. (SM)

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ED 448 158

Final Report
(Revised)

for the

National Study of Community College Career Corridors for K-12 Teacher Recruitment

Conducted by
Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.

In cooperation with the
National Partnership for Excellence
and Accountability in Teaching

NPEAT – HP Subcontract No. 3.3
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I. BACKGROUND: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Under the auspices of NPEAT, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (RNT) conducted a national study of community college programs that both encourage and help prepare prospective teachers to complete the baccalaureate degree and link to teacher preparation. The study sheds light on what has been described as "the missing rung" of the teacher education ladder—the often protracted and unfocused period when graduates of precollegiate teacher recruitment programs and non-traditional (adult) students seeking to become career teachers are prevented from ascending higher on the career ladder. Some of the obstacles blocking their ascent come from the lack of: appropriate academic advising; career guidance; targeted, meaningful pre-professional coursework and field experiences; mentoring and peer support; transferable credits; and articulation agreements. Whether called "school-to-work," "2 + 2 + 2," or "bridge" programs, strong local partnerships among secondary schools, the nation's 1,000-plus two-year colleges, and neighboring four-year institutions are essential to identify, prepare, and support students from the start of college study through completion of the baccalaureate and initial teaching license requirements.

About 45% of first-time undergraduates attend public community colleges. A growing portion of the 5.7 million students enrolled in community colleges are low-income, minority students; many of them are first-generation students (defined as "those for whom both parents' highest level of education is a high school diploma or less" [1]). Among all community college freshmen, 5.5% are interested in teaching at the elementary level and 3.5% are interested in secondary teaching.[2] This percentage translates into a total of over 500,000 individuals interested in becoming teachers—fully one-quarter of the total predicted need over the next ten years. Many of the community college students are paraeducators (teacher aides). They continue working full-time in their schools and attend college part-time, so that they might someday become certified teachers. All too often they reach a dead end, however, because the sixty or more credits that they have painstakingly accrued at the community college are unacceptable for transfer to a university. This is a terrible loss, not only to them personally, but also to the nation. Today, the need is greater than ever to expand and diversify the teacher candidate pool and ensure that the teaching force is well prepared and capable of assuming the new roles and responsibilities facing educators today.

Given the sizeable potential number of new teachers that the community college student pool represents, it makes good sense to focus the attention of researchers, educators, and policymakers on those community college programs that increase students' chances of transferring to four-year institutions and successfully exiting the teacher preparation pipeline as fully-trained teachers. These highlighted programs might then serve as tested examples upon which more programs might be built.

II. BASE YEAR AND YEAR ONE: IMPLEMENTATION OF

RESEARCH PLAN[3]

Our NPEAT study sought to determine and describe the role of community colleges in recruiting and developing new teachers. The primary research questions were: (1) Which community college programs explicitly recruit and help to prepare future K-12 teachers? and (2) What are their salient program features?

This study was to serve as an important step in an attempt to answer whether these programs: (1) increase the number of qualified K-12 teachers in the community; (2) increase the number of qualified minority K-12 teachers in the community; (3) increase the number of K-12 teachers in high-need areas, such as mathematics and science and underresourced urban schools; (4) build capacity to teach in schools characterized by student diversity (class, race, language, disability); and (5) build capacity to teach literacy. Regrettably, the cancellation of the NPEAT funding for the second part of the study – six site visits and a state scan – precluded an exploration of the outcomes of these programs in any material way, and, thus, limited RNT's ability to identify key program features that contributed to the successful achievement of the five specific goals.

Project Steps

RNT first developed a **research plan** and conducted a comprehensive **literature review** to gather information about the role of community colleges in K-12 teacher preparation *(base year deliverables, approved by OERI)*. Reviewing the literature allowed us to identify a limited number of community college teacher recruitment programs and glean an extensive amount of information to aid in the development of data collection instruments.

RNT also formed an **advisory board** (*base year deliverable, approved by OERI*) composed of representatives of both the policy and practitioner communities. Members represented major education associations; the Urban Teacher Collaborative (a partnership of RNT and the Council of the Great City Schools and the Great City Colleges of Education); and state education agencies, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies. The advisory board provided feedback on the draft research plan and literature review. Due to time and financial constraints, RNT communicated with the project advisory board primarily via postal mail, e-mail, telephone, and fax, rather than in person.

Based upon findings from the literature review, RNT also designed a comprehensive **program survey** *(deliverable #2271, March 1999, approved by OERI)*. RNT asked advisory board members to review a draft of the program survey, "RNT National Survey of Community College Career Corridors for K-12 Teacher Recruitment," and make suggestions for improvement with respect to its comprehensiveness, salience, clarity, and organization. RNT incorporated into the final draft of the survey the members' feedback on question phrasing and general survey organization.

In addition to the suggestions offered by the project advisory board, RNT depended upon OERI comments on the draft research plan in developing the final survey instrument. For example, we initially planned to limit our inquiry to community colleges that might have a formal *program*. OERI readers suggested that this approach might discourage responses from those community colleges that may not have a formal program, but may have some important elements of such a program. Therefore the survey was modified to include not only formal programs but also activities, classes, and services that would be considered important elements of teacher recruitment and preparation efforts.

Program Survey

As outlined in our original research plan and again in the draft program survey (*deliverable #2271*), the RNT National Survey requested information about the community college project, program and/or activities in the ten major areas. (Please see the attached survey for more detail.)

In March of 1999, RNT sent the program survey to more than 1,500 community college contacts, including community college presidents, deans, and vice presidents of instruction. RNT worked closely with Dr. David Pierce, president of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and a member of the project advisory board, to identify contacts at the community colleges and their branch campuses. A cover letter written on AACC letterhead and signed by Dr. Pierce and RNT accompanied all program surveys in order to emphasize the importance of the project and the value of each community college's response.

RNT also mailed program surveys to the directors of exemplary projects/programs at community colleges, such as the Project for Adult College Education (PACE) in Los Angeles, California, the Paraprofessional TeacherTraining Project (PTTP) also in California, and the National Science Foundation's multi-site Collaborative for Excellence in Teacher Preparation.

III. YEAR TWO: FINAL NPEAT STEPS[4]

In its original proposal, RNT had explained its intentions to conduct follow-up site visits to six community college sites and programs, as well as telephone interviews with the presidents of all 50 state boards of education. Both these components were meant to give depth and context to the information learned from the surveys. Given that NPEAT funding expired for this and all projects as of May 31, 2000, RNT was not able to include these steps as part of the study. The final steps for the NPEAT-funded project, then, are to report on the findings of the survey and to disseminate these findings to the widest possible audience.

Highlights of Survey Findings

The findings of RNT's National Survey are detailed in the final section of this

report, but highlights of the findings include the following:

- There is a great variety of community college teacher recruitment and preparation programs across the country, including some full-fledged schools of education serving thousands of students to programs serving only a handful of students that are run out of a particular liberal arts departments.

- Over three-quarters of responding programs (79.3%) do have some form of articulation agreement with a four-year institution, and 11.7% are in the process of establishing such agreements. It is interesting to note, however, that articulation agreements also are ranked as a fairly important institutional barrier to student success, suggesting that the mere existence of an articulation agreement may not be enough to ensure students' successful navigation of the process.

- The transfer rate (a mean of 50.3%) of students from responding community college teacher preparation programs to a four-year institution is more than double the national average of students who transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions 22%.

- The programs serve a notable range of student diversity. The average non-White participation rate in responding programs (39.5%) is substantially higher than in the current teaching force (13.5%) and notably higher than the average of non-White students in community colleges (28%). This figure represents a skewed mean, however, because several responding programs are dominated by one racial group.

- A vast majority of these programs (72.1%) do include some form of field experience, such as tutoring and working in day care centers.

- The top two ranked choices for program goals relate to transfer of students, indicating that these programs consider their mission to be to serve as the critical first rung on the teaching career ladder. The relatively high rank of goals related to supplying teachers for a particular field (special education, for example) suggests that these programs see themselves as active participants in expanding the teaching force.

- One of the highest ranked institutional barriers is tuition, and the highest ranked personal barrier is financial pressures, suggesting that even the reasonable tuition costs at community colleges are still too high for certain populations.

- Survey findings regarding personal barriers to success indicate students continue to respond to work and family obligations while participating in the teacher preparation program at the community college.

- One of the more paradoxical findings is the high ranking of "better qualified staff" as a program need, while almost all programs (96.6%) ranked the quality

of the faculty as among the top two program strengths.

Dissemination of Findings

In addition to the inclusion of this report in the volume that NPEAT intends to publish, RNT will circulate the findings to the widest possible audience. This may include journal articles; conference presentations (policy forums, RNT's national Pathways to Teaching Careers conference, AACC, AACTE, and other annual meetings); and newsletter articles (RNT's quarterly, *Future Teacher*, and other associations' newsletters). RNT also plans to post and major findings of this report on our Web site, www.rnt.org, and encourage visitors to use its findings to advance policy enabling community colleges to become a strong rung in the teacher career ladder.

IV. SELECTED SURVEY FINDINGS

Below is a statistical portrait of over 100 community college K-12 teacher recruitment and preparation programs, based on responses to RNT's "National Survey of Community College Career Corridors for K-12 Teacher Recruitment." Because project funding expired before conducting the site visits and the scan of state boards of education, RNT was somewhat limited in its ability to access program outcomes and, specifically, the impact that the responding programs might have upon expanding the pool of teachers. Instead, the findings highlighted below support findings in the literature regarding national data on community college student demographics and institutional strengths and weaknesses. Further, these findings also call attention to the diversity of community college teacher preparation programs.

A. METHODOLOGY

In 1999, RNT mailed a comprehensive survey to presidents and campus deans of 1,575 community colleges and branch campuses across the country, including programs known through RNT's review of literature and articles, programs funded through foundations or corporate grants, and the mailing list of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

RNT received 205 returned surveys, for a 13% response rate. This relatively low response rate deserves comment, as it was the result of three interdependent factors. First, in its eagerness to cast as wide a net as possible in order to reach the maximum number of community college K-12 teacher recruitment and preparation programs, RNT sent surveys to branch campuses and other affiliated programs of community colleges in addition to the central campuses. As RNT expanded the absolute number of survey recipients, however, the overall *percentage* of surveys returned necessarily declined. Second, to emphasize the importance of the survey, RNT sent it directly to the office of the president or campus dean of these institutions. In retrospect, we believe that this strategy of

mailing to presidents and not to program coordinators directly may have occasioned a good number of surveys to be discarded or lost before reaching their intended destination. A related consequence of this approach was that RNT's ability to follow-up on non-returned surveys was hampered when contacts in the office of the addressee were not familiar with teacher preparation programs or activities, even if such activities may have existed on campus. Finally, in an effort to extract as much information as possible, the survey itself was perhaps too long. Many potential respondents may have been dissuaded from completing the survey simply because of the time and investigation required to answer the entire survey satisfactorily. (A teacher preparation program director may not have had easy access to overall transfer rate information, for example.)

It is worth noting, too, that RNT suspected from the outset that there existed a low incidence of teacher preparation programs at the community college level, and, so a low response rate also may be indicative of the overall scarcity of such programs.

Once returned, completed surveys were put through a quality control process in order to ensure the highest degree of data entry accuracy. RNT staff reviewed each survey and then contacted the program director by telephone or e-mail in an attempt to gather missing information and/or clarify responses. (Several survey respondents did not answer all questions.)

B. RESPONDENTS

RNT received responses from 46 states and Puerto Rico. Respondents included urban metropolitan, suburban, and rural community colleges. Some of the major metropolitan areas represented include Chicago, Denver, Miami, St. Louis, New York City, Dallas, and Charlottesville, as well as suburban and rural areas across the country.

The first question on the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had a formal program, activities, both, or none. It became clear from the returned surveys, however, that the respondents interpreted "formal program" and "activities" inconsistently – selecting different responses for similar programs. Therefore, we combined the responses to create just two groups: respondents with programs, activities, or both; and respondents with *no* program or activities. There were 111 respondents who indicated a formal program, activities, or both, while 94 indicated "none." The findings below are calculated for the 111 respondents with programs or activities.

C. PROGRAM FOUNDATION

RNT's survey asked respondents to identify two important factors in the history of

the community college K-12 teacher preparation program: when the program began and who was responsible for its founding.

Founding Date

A vast majority of respondents (70.3%) noted that their teacher recruitment and preparation program began in the 1990s, while some programs reported being in existence since the founding of their community college in the 1950s or 1960s (11.7%).

Category	Number	Percentage
Founded 1999	5	4.5%
Founded 1998	20	18.0%
Founded 1997	14	12.6%
Founded 1996	8	7.2%
Founded 1990-1995	16	14.4%
Founded 1970-1989	20	18.0%
Founded prior to 1970	13	11.7%
No answer	15	13.5%
TOTAL	111	100.0%

Program Origins

In a majority of cases (72 or 64.9%), the community college was responsible for originating the teacher preparation program or activities. Of these 72, 41.6% of respondents identified the president of the college as the individual who initiated the program and 9.7% identified the Board of Trustees as initiators.

Many respondents reported origins of the teacher preparation program outside the community college, including university initiatives (18.9%), state policies or programs (18.0%), school districts (11.7%), and federal policies or programs (7.2%). A fifth (20.7%) responded that the program began with a source other than the options given on the survey. Some examples of these "other" origins include grants from the National Science Foundation, support from the Navajo Nation, corporate funding, academic deans, deans of Arts and Sciences, and individual professors at the community college.

Program Funding

The survey asked respondents to rate potential funding sources as "very important", "somewhat important", "of little importance", and "not a funding source". A majority of respondents (73.0%) identified the community college as a "very important" source of funding, while only 13.5% indicated the community college was "not a funding source" or "of little importance" as a funding source.

A majority (52.3%) identified the state as a "very important" funding source; an

additional 9.9% reported it was "somewhat important." Four in ten programs (40.5%) listed the federal government as either a very or somewhat important source of funding. Other very or somewhat important sources of funding included four-year colleges and universities (29.7%), school districts (18.9%), and business or corporate donors (17.1%). A small number of programs (12.4%) stated that foundation grants were a "very important" source of funding, while others (13.5%) listed foundations as "somewhat important" to funding the teacher preparation program.

Size of Programs

The size of the responding teacher preparation programs varies widely. The number of students participating in all respondents' teacher preparation programs totaled more than 24,000. Several of the teacher preparation programs – some as part of well-established schools of education – reported that more than 1,000 students participate in the teacher preparation program, while others indicate a much smaller number of participating students. The range among respondents was four to 4,283 participants. Fifty-five percent of respondents reported fewer than 120 students participating in the teacher preparation program or activities at the community college.

A majority of respondents (59.5%) noted that the number of students has grown in the past five years, while 22.5% noted that their program size has stayed the same, and only 4.5% reported a decrease in the number of students. Over a quarter of programs (27.9%) have increased their services over five years.

D. PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS

The RNT survey requested demographic data about the participants in these community college K-12 teacher preparation programs in order to determine whether these programs could potentially increase the pool of prospective teachers from underrepresented groups, such as teachers of color and male teachers. Not surprisingly, the participants in these programs do represent a fair amount of diversity in race, age, gender and background. These programs, like the institutions that house them, appear committed to open access and providing postsecondary learning opportunities to as wide a range of students as possible.

Race

As RNT's literature review elucidates, national statistics show that community colleges are, on average, nearly one-third ethnic and racial minority.[5] Furthermore, it is not unusual for the minority proportion of community college enrollments to exceed that of the general population. (This is the case for Hispanics in 41 states and for African-Americans in 21 states.) [6]

In keeping with these data, RNT found that participants in the responding community college teacher preparation programs represent a great deal of diversity. While a good number of programs served mainly white female students (the predominant demographic of current teachers), others served high proportions of students of color.

RNT survey respondents were asked to report the percentages of students in one of six categories: White, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, or Other. The following chart shows the mean for each category.

Ethnicity/Race of Student	Mean (%) of Survey Respondents	National Community College Enrollment [7]
African American	18.4	10.9
Hispanic	13.0	10.6
Native American/Alaskan Native	5.0	1.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.6	5.5
Other	2.1	3.0
White	60.5	67.3

These percentages are important to consider in light of other national data concerning the participation of people of color in teaching or teacher preparation programs. According to current NCES data, people of color make up just 13.5% of the current teaching force. In addition, the 1999 *Teacher Education Pipeline IV: Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education Enrollments by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender* report by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, states that individuals from underrepresented racial/ethnic and linguistic backgrounds make up approximately 20% of enrollment in the schools, colleges, and departments of education surveyed. The RNT survey respondents data of non-White students exceed both the NCES and the AACTE data, as approximately 39.5% of participants in the responding programs are non-White. This figure also exceeds the national mean of community college students.

While these figures suggest a high racial/ethnic diversity among programs, it does somewhat camouflage the lack of diversity *within* programs. A number of programs serve predominantly White students, and substantial majorities of programs show 25% or less participation by African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Many of the programs do not serve a diverse group of students, but instead are dominated by a certain ethnic/racial group. For instance, forty-two of the responding programs serve predominantly White students (75-100% of the total student body); while four programs serve

predominantly African-American students; and four programs serve predominantly Native American/Alaskan Native students.

Age

The age of community college students in responding programs varies as well. Survey respondents were asked to provide the percentage of students in the teacher preparation program who were 18-24, 25-30, 31-40, and over 40. Eighty-six programs responded to this question.

Category	Percentage
18 – 24	46.3
25 – 30	21.3
31 – 40	21.0
Over 40	9.3

More specifically, almost half (45.4%) of responding teacher preparation programs indicated that between 50-100% of participating students are between the ages of 18 and 24. In addition, 22.1% of respondents indicated that 25-75% of their students are between the ages of 25-30; and 20.9% indicated that 25-75% of students are between the ages of 31-40, indicating that many programs have a considerable range of age representation within their student bodies.

These findings are consistent with the national data on community college students' ages contained in the literature review. Students at two-year colleges tend to be older than their counterparts at four-year colleges and universities, and over the past 20 years, the number of students 25 and older attending community colleges has grown both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the enrollment as a whole. The current average age for community college students is 29.[8]

Gender

The average male participation rate is 21.3%. Notably, the gender composition of the programs is only half the male enrollment average of 42% in community colleges nationally. It does, however, approximate the gender composition of the current teaching force (25.6%).[9] Moreover, 27 programs report a percentage of students above this national average, with 14 programs reporting a male participation rate of at least 35%; and three programs reporting a male participation rate is at least 60%.

Part-time and Full-time students

One of the common characteristics of the community college student body is the high proportion of part-time students. Thirty-one percent of respondents reported that more than 50% of their students are part-time. Moreover, only nine programs

(8.1%) report that at least 90% of their students attend on a full-time basis. (Ninety five of the 111 respondents answered this question.)

E. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The programs themselves feature a wide range of program characteristics, ranging from hosting a chapter of Future Educators of America, to targeted education courses within a broader liberal arts curriculum, to independent schools of education that award associate's degrees in specific fields of education (e.g., elementary, special, etc.).

Program Goals

The survey asked respondents to rank the five most important goals of the teacher preparation program (out of a list of 14 possible choices) on a descending 1 – 5 scale.

Sixty-four percent of respondents chose "helping prospective K-12 teachers be eligible for transfer to four-year institutions" as their first or second goal (i.e., a "1" or a "2"). Fifty-four percent of respondents chose "offering pre-professional K-12 teacher education curriculum for transfer credit" as either their first or second goal. Almost half (46.3%) of respondents indicated that "assisting paraprofessionals/paraeducators seeking to become K-12 teachers" was among the program's top two goals, and 44.8% indicated that "increasing the supply of minority teachers" ranked as their first or second goal.

Forty-three percent of respondents noted that increasing the supply of special education teachers was among their top two goals, and 41.2% chose increasing the supply in (other) high-need areas, specifying math, science, technology, and foreign language (among others). In addition, establishing a formal articulation agreement was chosen as a first or second goal by 40.7% of respondents.

The goals of these programs seem to match those of the larger mission of the community college, namely, to offer diverse populations an entry into higher education, especially as a first step on the ladder leading towards baccalaureate or graduate degrees. That a majority of these programs indicated their first or second goal was to ease transfer to four-year institutions demonstrates a strong commitment to moving their students up this higher education ladder. This commitment becomes even more apparent with the specific measures described below that many programs have in place to facilitate this transfer.

Articulation, Joint Admission, and Transfer

A student from a community college K-12 teacher preparation program cannot become a licensed public school teacher without at least a baccalaureate degree. Therefore, RNT's survey contained several questions regarding articulation and student transfer from the community college to a four-year institution. Articulation refers to formal alignment of courses, criteria and requirements between cooperating junior and senior institutions, whereas transfer is the student's act of leaving one institution and matriculating at another.[10]

The RNT survey found that 79% of respondents have a formal articulation agreement with a four-year institution. In addition, 11.7% of respondents reported that such an agreement was in process/planning (as of spring 1999).

In addition to articulation agreements, some two- and four-year institutions jointly admit students (i.e., if they are accepted at the junior college, they are also accepted at the four-year college). Forty (36.0%) have such a policy, while another 15 (13.5%) report that joint admission policy is in development. Fifty respondents (45.0%) indicate that no such policy exists or is in the planning process.

The survey requested information about the overall transfer rate of students in community college transfer programs, and the transfer rate of students participating in the K-12 teacher preparation program or activities. Only 64 of the 111 institutions with programs (57.6%) responded to the program transfer question. It should be noted that, for a number of reasons, the calculation of transfer rates from community college to four-year institutions is often imprecise or difficult to determine.[11] It is this difficulty that likely accounts for the relatively low response rate to this question.

Among the 64 respondents, the mean transfer rate was 50.3%, more than twice the average transfer rate for general community college students. (According to a recent Educational Testing Service report, the transfer rate for community college students is estimated to be around 22%, and 39% for students who had stated an intention to transfer upon entering community college).[12] More than half of respondents estimate their program transfer rate to be *at or above* 50%, thus, it is not just a few programs with high transfer rates offsetting the mean, but rather a fairly even distribution spread.

Program Partnerships

The RNT survey asked whether community college teacher preparation programs operated in partnership with other programs or organizations to recruit and help prepare prospective K-12 teachers. More than half of the respondents (56.8%) indicated they operate in partnership with a public four-year institution to this end, and another 16.2% operate in partnership with a private four-year institution. (A few community colleges indicated partnerships with both public and private four-year colleges, so there is some overlap.) Many programs (42.3%) also partner with local school districts.[13]

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the teacher preparation program involved faculty teaching at any partner institutions. Twenty-two respondents (19.8%) reported that faculty from a four-year institution teach at the community college, and 15 (13.5%) noted that community college faculty teach at a four-year institution. The majority of respondents (59.5%) reported that no faculty teach at partner institutions.

Program Curricula and Extracurricular Activities

Thirty-five percent of respondents (39 programs) indicated that two or fewer pre-professional courses are offered for prospective K-12 teachers as part of their program, while 21.6% (24 programs) offer between three and five courses. Nine percent of respondents (10 programs) offer more than ten such courses.

The RNT survey requested information about the community college teacher preparation programs' curricular activities. Seventy-two percent (80 programs) offer pre-service teaching opportunities/field experience; 57.7% offer a specially designed introductory course for prospective K – 12 teachers; 43.2% offer elementary teacher education courses; and 32.4% include activities designed to build capacity to teach in schools characterized by student diversity. In addition, 28.8% percent of respondents offer education technology courses, and the same percentage offer courses targeted specifically for prospective K – 12 math or science teachers; 25.2% offer courses targeted specifically for prospective K – 12 special education teachers. (Ten percent did not respond to this question.)

In addition to curricular offerings, many programs offer extracurricular activities for prospective teachers. Fifty-six percent (55.9%) of respondents offer program participants an introduction to the local four-year college or university; 50.5% offer tutoring in local K – 12 schools/community; 43.2% offer career awareness/development workshops; 27.9% offer a future teacher club; and 25.2% offer education-related summer and/or part-time employment assistance/placement. (12.6% did not respond to this particular question.)

Program Strengths

The RNT survey asked respondents to rank 18 program characteristics on a scale of 1 – 4 (1 = "very strong," 2 = "strong," 3 = "fairly strong," and 4 = "weak").

Two-thirds (66.0%) of respondents ranked "quality of teaching faculty" as "very strong." (The figure rises to 96.0% when including programs that rate their quality of teaching faculty as "strong.") More than half of respondents chose the highest rating (i.e., a "1") for "introduces students to a career in K – 12 teaching" (52.9%), "quality of program curriculum," (52.9%), "increases support for teacher preparation at the community college level" (50.5%); and "offers opportunities for field-based experience" (50.5%).

Just 16.5% of respondents stated that links between high school and community

college teacher recruitment efforts were "very strong", while less than a quarter of respondents chose the highest rating for "increase the number of K-12 teachers in high-need areas" (20.2%), and "increase the number of qualified minority K-12 teachers" (24.7%). Twenty-three percent (23.8%) rated "quality of mentoring provided to students" as very strong, and 20.8% noted their program was very strong in "prepar[ing] students for competency testing." Meanwhile, respondents ranked these two latter items in the bottom two categories (i.e., "weak" or "fairly strong") as 50.5% and 50.0%, respectively.

Almost seven in 10 (68.5%) of respondents report an internal evaluation, another 36.9% indicate they administer student satisfaction surveys, and 29.7% participate in external evaluations. (Multiple responses allowed.) Only 11.7% of programs report no form of evaluation. (Six percent of respondents did not answer the question.)

Taken together, the responses to this self-evaluative question, like that of program goals, also speak to the mission of the community college. Programs perceive themselves to be more effective with their teaching and their ability to furnish their students with a positive higher education experience than with the more concrete results of preparing them for tests or moving them successfully into teaching.

F. BARRIERS AND NEEDS

The literature review stressed the fact that the typical community college population is poorer, older, and less familiar with the higher education system than the student population attending four-year institutions. In turn, the particular barriers identified as high ranking by survey respondents tend to reflect the complications that result from opening access to higher education to this population of students. That is, for a large proportion of students, both financial strains and family responsibilities rank as significant barriers to success.

The consequences of these personal barriers are that when they are coupled with institutional barriers (such as large classes and inflexible class scheduling), they can act to prevent community colleges students' transfer to four-year institutions to continue their teacher training and become classroom teachers.

Individual Barriers

The RNT survey asked respondents to rank the five greatest personal/ individual barriers to teacher preparation student success (out of 10 possible choices) on a descending 1 – 5 scale. Almost seven in ten (69.6%) respondents chose "financial pressures" as either the first or second greatest barrier to student success. Respondents also cited work-related responsibilities (52.5%) and family-related responsibilities (41.4%) as among the top two individual/personal barriers. Inadequate academic preparation and poor study skills also hinder students (40.4% and 35.6%, respectively), as do transportation problems (12.9%) and lack

of focus or direction (12.5%).

The barriers identified by these programs appear to be representative of students' personal characteristics. National data show that large numbers of two-year students work part or full time, and college course schedules, if inflexible, can interfere with their ability to subsidize their studies and, in many cases, support their families. In turn, students often find it difficult to juggle family responsibilities with their commitments to work and school.[14] In addition, many community college students are uncertain climbers on the educational career ladder. Lack of confidence and persistence can impair students' progress, as can failure to take a proactive approach to accessing available support services. Even with the most dedicated faculty advisor and comprehensive guidance services, a student who is uncommitted to her/his studies will not succeed.[15]

Institutional Barriers

Certainly, some barriers to success are beyond students' control. RNT's survey asked respondents to rank the five greatest institutional barriers to student success (out of 16 possible choices) also on a descending 1 – 5 scale.

While one community college teacher preparation program director stated, "There do not appear to be any institutional barriers," this observation was atypical. Six out of ten respondents (62.5%) selected "large classes" as one of their top two institutional barriers, and 61.9% selected tuition/fees. More than half (54.5%) selected faculty availability, and exactly half selected transfer counseling, pre-service experience, and formal articulation agreements (for transfer of academic credit) as either the first or second greatest barriers to student success. In addition, a large percentage of respondents (64.7%) filled in responses other than those offered by the survey. Some responses included "state addition of field work requirement to class without additional credit," "general educational/transfer requirements that limit flexibility in course selection" and "personal counseling services". The scheduling, availability, and location of courses were found to be among the top institutional barriers for almost half of respondents (49.2%, 47.8%, and 44.4%, respectively).

Program Needs

Respondents were asked to rank the five most important needs of their teacher preparation program out of a list of 12 choices (on a descending 1 – 5 scale).

Ranked highest as the first or second most important need was "better qualified staff" (77.8% of respondents chose this as either "1" or "2"), while 70.0% chose "more program funding" as either their first or second most important need. However, only 33.3% of respondents indicated that better qualified staff was their *most* important need (i.e., a ranking of "1"), while 57.7% chose "more program funding" as their most important need.

More student financial aid was chosen first or second by 64.7% of respondents,

and more than half selected better recruitment efforts (58.6%), more cooperation/assistance from partner organization (53.8%), and better student selection process (50.0%) as their first or second need.

These needs suggest that many teacher preparation programs (and perhaps the community college, generally) are in need of more money and resources to better accommodate their students, especially to help them with their own financial needs. That a majority cited the need for better cooperation with their partner institutions or organization might indicate that community colleges sense that, as the literature review explains as a national phenomenon, their program is not taken as seriously by either neighboring school districts or 4-year institutions.

V. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In some ways, it is difficult to derive any meaningful lessons from this survey alone. Follow-up site visits and the state scan were intended to give the survey findings context and enable RNT to offer serious recommendations for community colleges or policymakers looking to initiate or improve their own programs. The missing element that would enable RNT to offer these kinds of recommendations, of course, is the key indicator of outcomes. That is, it is difficult to determine from this survey alone which are the more and less effective programs overall, in terms of acting as a source for producing the next generation of teachers.

At the same time, the survey did access one key indicator of a program's success—success defined for our purposes as the program's ability to move students along the teacher preparation pipeline. That data point is the transfer rate. If a program is to be successful in helping to train individuals who might become teachers, then students must transfer from the community college to a four-year institution to continue up the teacher career ladder.

A. LESSONS FROM HIGH TRANSFER PROGRAMS

RNT singled out those programs reporting a relatively high (for community colleges) transfer rate—in this case, 50% or over—to determine if this sample of respondents demonstrated characteristics different from those of other programs. The transfer rate of 50% or higher was chosen because it represents the top 50% (by mean) of respondents answering this question. (The mean transfer rate over the 64 programs responding to this question was 50.3%.) In addition, the mean transfer rate nationally of community college students with a stated intention of going to a four-year institution is 39%, thus 50% represents a rate that indicates an exceptionally effective transfer program.

If these "high transfer programs" do differ from the general program population surveyed, then new or less effective programs might strive to copy these

characteristics to begin or improve their own programs. For the purposes of analyzing survey results in terms of our ultimate aim of producing more teachers, then, these 39 high transfer programs might serve as programs worthy of replication.

Articulation and Joint Admission

As noted above, one of the ways in which community colleges try to facilitate the transfer of their students to four-year institutions is to develop articulation agreements and joint admissions policies with nearby colleges. Comparing high transfer institutions to the whole pool, RNT found that there is only a slightly higher rate of articulation agreement (82.1% compared to 79.3%). High transfer institutions did have a higher joint admissions policy (53.8% compared to 45.0%).

It seems then that formal policies designed to ease transfer do not seem to have an important influence on students' actual transfer among these programs surveyed, and that community colleges generally do try to have these policies (especially articulation agreements) in place, regardless of the results they may produce.

Program Characteristics

As to the design of the programs themselves, there is much similarity between all programs and those high transfer programs, with the specific elements of the program appearing with the same relative frequency in both samples. At the same time, high transfer programs do report a consistent 8-12% higher occurrence of the most common program characteristics.

Both groups have a large majority that offer pre-service teaching opportunities (82.1% among high transfer programs, 72.1% among all programs); with lesser proportions offering introductory courses for prospective K-12 teachers (66.7% to 57.7%, respectively); elementary education courses (51.3% to 43.2%, respectively); and educational technology courses (38.5% to 28.8%, respectively). Both groups' programs also build capacity to teach in schools characterized by student diversity (48.7% to 32.4%, respectively).

Reported extracurricular activities also show similar rankings between groups, with the high transfer programs again reporting consistently higher proportions in each category. Specifically, both groups note that they offer an introduction to a local four-year college/university more than any other possible listed extracurricular activity, though a significantly higher proportion of high transfer programs offer this (74.4% compared to 55.9%). Other activities offered include tutoring in local K-12 schools (61.5% compared to 50.5%) and career awareness/development workshops (53.8% compared to 43.2%).

In short, the high transfer programs do offer the elements of solid teacher preparation programs at a higher occurrence than the group of programs as a whole (with the formal introduction to a local college or university standing as the most significant differentiating characteristic). At the same time, priorities of

program elements generally align regardless of the program's effectiveness in moving students to four-year institutions.

Institutional Barriers

Another test of the value of programs is to gauge the ways the institutional barriers hinder the progress of students. Compare the most commonly cited top institutional barriers (rated as a "1" or "2") on a 1 – 5 descending scale by high transfer programs to those top barriers cited by all programs: large classes (25.0% compared to 62.5%), tuition/fees (50.0% compared to 62.5%), and transfer counseling (37.5% compared to 50.0%). Only faculty availability was cited more often as an institutional barrier by high transfer institutions (75.0% compared to 54.5%).

These differences suggest that the high transfer programs have found ways of reducing class size, making tuition more reasonable, and giving their students adequate counseling more effectively than the programs as a whole. Together these may help to contribute to a higher proportion of students moving up the teacher career ladder.

Of particular note are that class size and counseling are cited less often as barriers. Both these elements are ones that tell of a program's commitment to addressing individual needs. That high transfer programs do not find these services focused on the individual to be barriers as frequently as the group of programs as a whole suggests that they do a more effective job at catering to the needs of individual students and, in turn, that this focus might pay off in higher rate of their students moving along the teacher preparation pipeline.

Program Needs

A final lens through which to view possible differences between the more successful programs and the whole group of programs is to explore the different responses to the question on program needs. As noted above, ranked highest among all programs as the first or second most important need was "better qualified staff" (77.8% of respondents chose this as either "1" or "2"), while 70.0% chose "more program funding" as either their first or second most important need. More student financial aid was chosen first or second by 64.7% of respondents, and more than half selected better recruitment efforts (58.6%), more cooperation/assistance from partner organization (53.8%), and better student selection process (50.0%) as their first or second need.

As for the high transfer programs, a remarkable 100% chose "better qualified staff" as a top need, and almost two-thirds (63.6%) chose "better curriculum." Meanwhile, more program funding and better recruitment efforts was noted as a top need by a majority (57.7% and 52.6%, respectively). Exactly half (50.0%) identified more student financial aid as a top need.

It seems that the more effective programs do have the same kinds of needs as

programs overall, but at lower frequency and, so, as a whole, presumably are not feeling the "pinch" of low funding for the program or student tuition quite as tightly.

At the same time, their demonstrated level of success in easing the transfer of students may push them to seek a better qualified faculty and improved curriculum with an even greater fervor than programs overall. Perhaps these programs realize that for their students to succeed in four-year institutions, their own program must boost its own faculty and curriculum to be more certain that their graduates will be able to handle the rigors of the senior institution.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the survey responses of these programs and, especially, the responses of the high transfer programs, RNT offers the following recommendations.

1. **Articulation agreements** and **joint admissions** policies are important to have in place, as they do help to ease the transfer from community college to a four-year institution. At the same time, however, they are not a guarantee of successful transfer, as the high transfer institutions have only a slightly higher incidence of these policies. Other elements must be in place.

2. It is meaningful to have as part of the community college teacher preparation program a **formal introduction to a local four-year college or university**. Those programs with higher transfer rates have incorporated this introduction at a significantly higher rate than programs overall. Still, this element, too, is no guarantee that successful transfer will take place.

3. Effective **counseling** is essential to the success of programs in helping students to transfer to four-year institutions, for two interdependent reasons. First, the maze of course credits can often be complicated and inaccessible without a trained specialist to point out which courses and routes are most effective for moving easily from the community college to a senior institution. Second, as noted above, community college students are frequently the first in their family to attend a higher education institution and are not familiar with the terminology and logic of course credits. High transfer institutions that view their counseling (or lack of it) as a barrier to student success is lower than for programs overall.

4. Adequate **funding**, like with any program, seems to be critical to its success. Funding includes not only sufficient resources to provide students with a number of course offerings and smaller classes, but also scholarships and financial aid to students, who often hail from lower SES families. High transfer institutions report a lower incidence of needing increased funding than do programs as a whole.

* * *

This survey offers an introductory "big picture" view of community college programs in the country dedicated to preparing K – 12 teachers. The survey responses should be considered a starting point for further research, and as way to highlight explicitly how national data reveal themselves in particular programs. In order to fully appreciate the impact these programs currently have and potentially may have, however, an in-depth study of their practices and policies is needed.

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[3] Base Year and Year One are NPEAT designations for the first and second years of the project.

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[11] For a discussion of the difficulty in calculating transfer rates, see Coley, Richard J. "*The*

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[12] Coley, "The American Community College Turns 100."

[13] While the survey did not ask for reasons community colleges partnered with local school districts, it is interesting to note that nearly 8 out of 10 respondents (79.2%) indicated they offered pre-service teaching opportunities as part of their program.

[14] Woods and Williams, 1987; Morris, 1990; Anderson and Goertz, 1995.

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